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SIPDIS
SENSITIVE

DEPARTMENT FOR IO/T, IO/EDA

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TAGS: [ECON](#) [UNCTAD](#)
SUBJECT: UNCTAD SEC GEN RACE

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED, NOT FOR INTERNET

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Cote d'Ivoire Perm Rep Gauze is bidding to replace current UNCTAD Secretary General Supachai, whose first term ends this summer, but the challenge is unlikely to meet with much success absent Africa Group support. END SUMMARY

Ambassador declares candidacy

¶2. (SBU) Ivory Coast Ambassador Guy Alain Gauze visited Charge on May 13 to present his candidacy for the post of UNCTAD Secretary General. After initially confusing us by speaking about himself in the third person, Gauze made clear that he thinks he is a very good candidate due to his experience in Geneva. However, when asked what concrete projects he envisioned for UNCTAD under his leadership, he merely said he hoped to organize regional conferences to focus on the specific needs of the developing countries.

¶3. (SBU) Gauze criticized UNCTAD for failing to deliver results, as judged either by the donor countries or the developing countries. He said UNCTAD need not always have a North-South divide. He added that under Supachai's absence of leadership, UNCTAD has been on autopilot.

¶4. (SBU) Gauze acknowledged that the Africa Group has not yet decided upon a candidate, and that Kenya has also floated a proposal to field a candidate (former Trade Minister Kituyi). He suggested that the Africa Group would soon decide, and would endorse him, because of the desire for UNCTAD to be more responsive to African LDCs.

Thai Response: Supachai wants to continue

¶5. (SBU) Thai Charge Vijavat (Kit) Isarabhakdi visited on May 15 to provide, in understated Thai fashion, background on the re-appointment of Supachai in order to dispel any doubts that Supachai wants and deserves a second term. He noted that past practice has been for UNCTAD SGs to serve two terms; no one yet has served only one. Rumors are untrue that Supachai is uninterested in the job, wants to go back to Thailand for a political post, and has lost the confidence of UN SyG Ban. Ban has already told delegations in New York of his intent to keep Supachai. Sudan, as Chair of the G77 and the Africa Group, had asked Ban for more time for consultations in recognition of the two possible African candidates (including another one from Kenya), but no one wants this to drag on. He added that the letter he had received from the Ivory Coast Mission had been signed by that Mission's DCM, so he doubts that Gauze has his own government's support, much less that of the Africa Group. However, he acknowledged that India, smarting about Indian national Lakshmi Puri not being chosen as UNCTAD Deputy, has begun campaigning against Supachai too, and so he requested US support for keeping Supachai.

COMMENT

¶6. (SBU) In our view, Gauze has not presented a strong case. The possible Kenyan candidate has not yet approached us, so although we

have heard good things about him, we do not know if he can present a credible challenge to Supachai. Without the African Group mounting a better organized campaign, Supachai is likely to remain. Until and unless the Africa Group decides upon a single candidate, the USG need not take a position on this issue.

STORELLA #